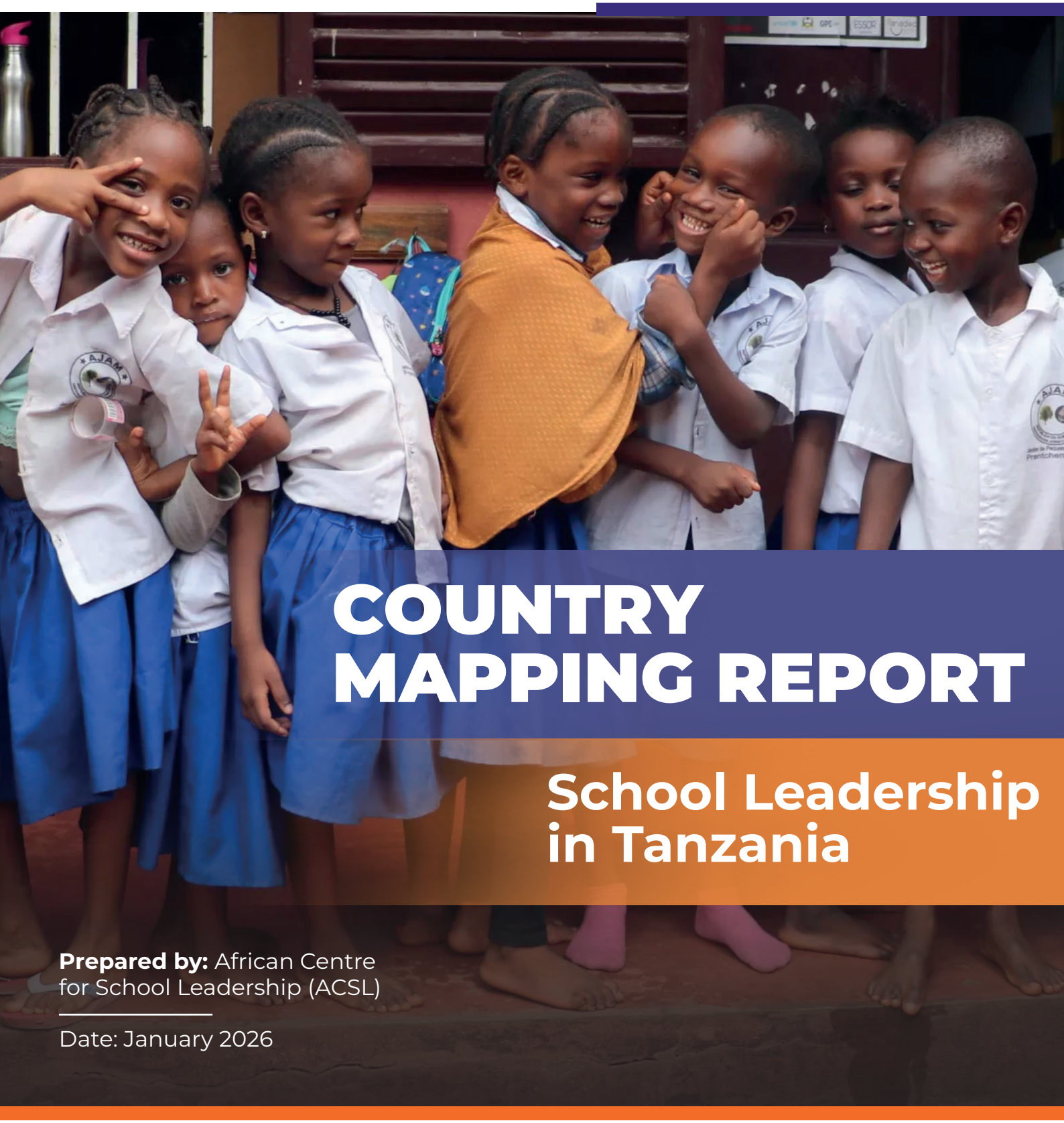
African Centre for School Leadership

In partnership with

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COUNTRY MAPPING REPORT

School Leadership in Tanzania

Prepared by: African Centre for School Leadership (ACSL)

Date: January 2026

The African Centre for School Leadership (ACSL) is a coalition of partners coordinated by ADEA, ESSA, FAWE and VVOB.

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List of abbreviations

ADEM	Agency for the Development of Educational Management
AHT	Assistant Head Teacher
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DSEO	District Secondary Education Officer
GEM	Global Education Monitoring
HT	Head Teacher
MEWAKA	Mafunzo Endelevu kwa Walimu Kazini (National Framework for Teacher continuous professional development)
MoEVT	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training
SUZA	State University of Zanzibar
NTA	National Technical Award
WSDP	Whole School Development Plan
PMO-RALG	Prime Minister's Office Regional Administration and Local Government
RGoZ	Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar
TIE	Tanzania Institute of Education
WEO	Ward Education Officer
ZIE	Zanzibar Institute of Education



1. Introduction

Effective school leadership is increasingly recognized as a critical lever for improving education quality and equity across Africa. As countries work to strengthen education systems, there is a growing need to understand the current status of school leadership support structures and to identify strategic opportunities for further development (Lopez et al., 2024). Despite this recognition, there remains limited systematic documentation of school leadership structures, policies, and practices in many African contexts, including Tanzania. Understanding the current landscape is critical for designing interventions that strengthen school leadership and contribute to system-wide educational improvement.

In Tanzania, VVOB —education for development, on behalf of the African Centre for School Leadership (ACSL), and the Agency for the Development of Educational Management are implementing a programme to support the professional development of all secondary school and education leaders. As part of this partnership, VVOB leads the LEAD pillar of the Leaders in Teaching (LIT) initiative, which focuses on policy development, professional development, research, monitoring and evaluation, and advocacy. The programme aims to strengthen leadership practices, promote data-driven decision-making aligned with Tanzania's competency-based curriculum reforms, support women in leadership, and equip learners—particularly those from underserved communities—with transferable, digital, and entrepreneurial skills. Capacity-building efforts target school heads, assistant heads, ward education officers, and district and regional academic officers.

A key activity under the LIT–LEAD programme is a mapping of the school leadership landscape, designed to document existing policies, programmes, research, and stakeholders, while identifying opportunities for innovation and system-wide improvement. The exercise employed a phased approach, including a desk review of policy and research documents, stakeholder mapping across government, institutions, civil society, academia, and the private sector, primary data collection through online surveys, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions in both Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, followed by a validation workshop to refine findings.

Tanzania's education governance structure reflects its unique political history. The union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar in 1964 created a system in which higher education and national examinations are union matters, while primary, secondary, technical, and vocational education are non-union matters managed separately by the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar (RGoZ). The country comprises 31 regions 26 on the mainland and 5 in Zanzibar with 185 Local Government Authorities on the mainland. Governance structures, terminologies, and support mechanisms vary across jurisdictions: Mainland Tanzania distinguishes between "Head Teacher" at the primary level and "Head of School" at the secondary level, whereas Zanzibar uses "Head Teacher" across both levels. In this report, we are using the term 'Head of School' for consistency. Pre-primary and primary education are largely managed independently, resulting in variations in structures, policies, and support, while secondary education is more harmonised, exemplified by close collaboration between the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) and the Zanzibar Institute of Education (ZIE) on curriculum development.

This report examines school leadership in both Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, highlighting similarities, differences, and opportunities for strengthening coherence across the education system. Additionally, the study examined how research is produced, shared, and applied, and it culminated in a co-created National Research Agenda for strengthening leadership research and practice. The report provides a foundation for evidence-based recommendations aimed at improving policy, practice, and professional development in school leadership, with implications for Tanzania and for broader efforts across the African continent.

2. Methodology

The African Centre for School Leadership (ACSL) employed a structured, phased approach to map the landscape of school leadership policies, practices, research, and professional development in Tanzania. More on the ACSL approach to mapping here.

2.1. Approach

The mapping employed a mixed-methods approach combining desk-based evidence synthesis, metadata analysis, primary data collection, and participatory agenda-setting processes. This multi-pronged approach ensured both breadth and depth, allowing for systematic analysis while capturing lived realities, motivations, and institutional considerations that shape school leadership research in the country.

a. A Desk review

The desk review served as the entry point for understanding school leadership frameworks and practices in Tanzania. The GEM Report UNESCO (2024) provided the initial reference for analysing policies and professional development initiatives. The review focused on legislation, policy frameworks, and programme outputs, supplemented by a snowballing method to identify additional reports and evaluations.

To contextualise the review for Tanzania, a mapping of 161 publications (2010–2025) was conducted, structured around five thematic areas: policy and practice, instructional leadership, leadership styles and school performance, leadership development and training, and gender and inclusive leadership. Publications were drawn from the African Education Research Database (AERD), international indexing services such as Scopus and Web of Science and local repositories. Additionally, twenty-three local repositories and databases were mapped, with ten yielding usable results, including ResearchGate, University of Dar es Salaam Journals, University of Dodoma Research Repository, COSTECH Integrated Repository, AJOL, ERIC, SSRN, and Google Scholar. Each publication was reviewed to extract metadata covering authorship, gender, institutional affiliation, research focus, methodology, source of funding, and attention to equity dimensions such as gender, disability and rurality. The review also employed a thematic coding framework aligned with eight domains of school leadership research, allowing comparison across studies.

b. Data collection

A mixed-methods approach guided the data collection: An online survey with 66 researchers provided detailed insights into their academic backgrounds, motivations, research practices, dissemination patterns and challenges. Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with policymakers, education officials, and institutional representatives, and focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with school leaders and researchers to explore key themes in depth.

Key stakeholders included government and education officials, researchers, academia, development partners, think tanks, and civil society organisations (CSOs). In Mainland Tanzania, KIIs were conducted with representatives from ADEM, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), and the Prime Minister – Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RALG), while in Zanzibar, interviews and FGDs included MoEVT officials and school leaders, ensuring gender balance and geographic representation. FGDs and group discussions were also conducted with universities and research institutions, including the University of Dar es Salaam, the University of Zanzibar, the University of Dodoma, Aga Khan University, and the State University of Zanzibar. CSOs, including Milele, Madrasa, and the Zanzibar Research Centre & Policy Analysis were engaged through joint FGDs. A total of 58 participants were reached, with 43% female representation. Figure 1 provides an overview of the representation.

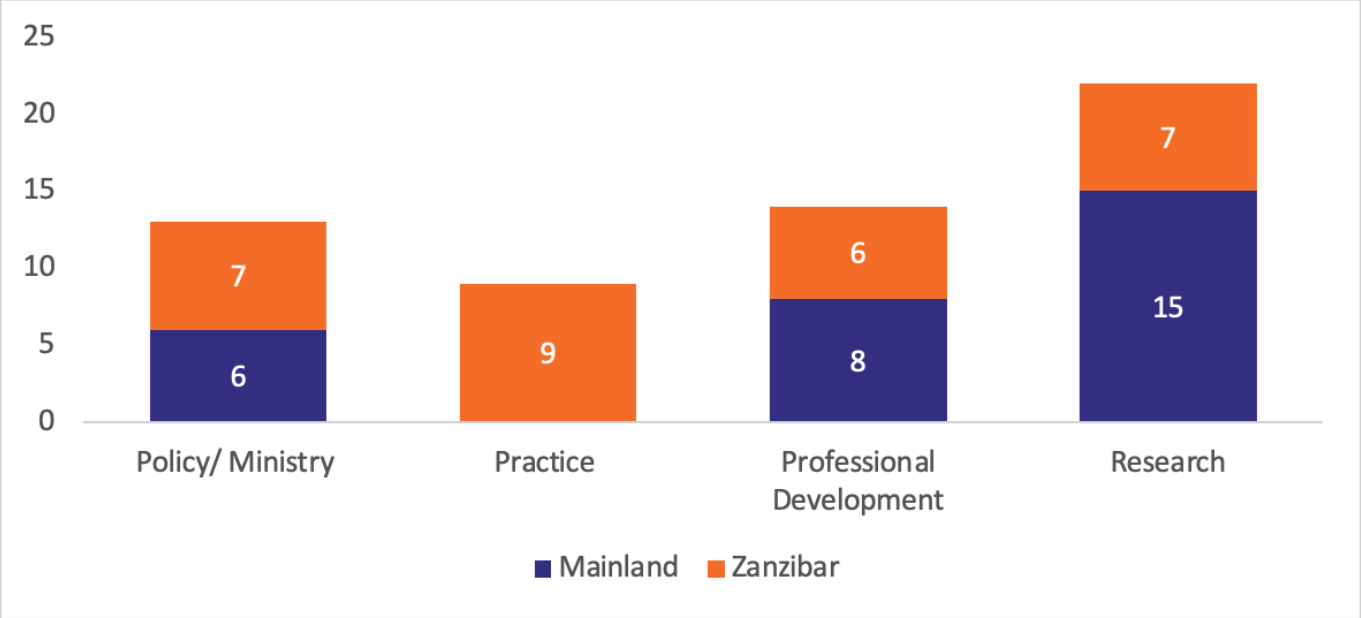


Figure 1: Participants' representation in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar *Source: ACSL (2025) Mapping Report*

c. Validation of the mapping report

The findings were subsequently validated through a three-day workshop in Tanzania, convening over 50 participants from government, academia, civil society, and development partners. The workshop confirmed the mapping results, co-created a research agenda, and charted a shared roadmap for strengthening school leadership systems in Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar. The event was jointly organised by ADEM, VVOB, and ACSL, with active participation from MoEST, PMO-RALG, MoEVT Zanzibar, ADEM, universities, CSOs, and development partners.

2.2. Limitation

This mapping exercise provides valuable insights into school leadership in Tanzania based on data collected in 2025. However, the findings should be interpreted with caution due to several limitations. The findings reflect the perspectives of selected participants and may not represent the entire population. Responses may be influenced by personal experience or social desirability. Limited regional coverage may have constrained representation of local variations, and logistical and time constraints affected the depth and number of engagements. Sensitive topics may have been underreported. In addition, database searches may have missed relevant research, particularly grey literature, institutional reports, or unpublished theses, and some repositories were restricted by subscription or incomplete researcher profiles. Finally, search terms and strategies, while extensive, may not have captured all relevant literature, potentially excluding some studies.

3. Key findings



This section presents the mapping findings on the policy and system landscape, school leadership practices and professional development, research and researchers in school leadership as well as the advocacy, communication, and secondary coordination in school leadership in Tanzania.

3.1. Policy and system landscape

a) Structure of educational leadership in Tanzania

Educational leadership in Tanzania operates within two distinct governance structures: Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar. Mainland Tanzania follows a decentralised model administered through Local Government Authorities (LGAs) under the Prime Minister's Office – Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO - RALG). Regional Education Officers (REO) and District Education Officers (DEO), along with Ward Education Officers, play key supervisory and administrative roles. Zanzibar, governed by the RGoZ, maintains a more centralised system, with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) overseeing the sector. Below the ministry are REOs and DEOs, while wards exist only politically and do not have operational Ward Education Officers. A MoEVT representative explained:

> At the school level, leadership includes a Head Teacher (HT), supported by up to two Assistant Head Teachers (administrative and academic, depending on school size), an academic coordinator, and section leaders. HTs and AHTs are promoted by MoEVT, while the HT appoints other roles. Although the structures are clear, HTs can go directly to the ministry for quick action.

Despite structural differences, both systems recognise Heads of Schools as central actors in school management, supported by school management teams, community structures, and student leadership bodies. Educational leadership is highly centralised in policy but decentralised in implementation.

Table 1: Key actors per administrative level

Administrative level	Actors and roles
Central level	**Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST)** (Mainland): Oversees education policy, regulation, monitoring, quality assurance, and teacher professional standards.
	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) (Zanzibar): Leads education provision, vocational training, curriculum oversight, and policy development.
	Prime Minister's Office – Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RALG): Responsible for basic and secondary education, including teacher recruitment, deployment, payroll, school resource allocation, and management of teacher training colleges.
Regional level	**Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS)** who is the chief executive officer of a region and serves as a key figure in overseeing administrative and social sectors, including education.
	Regional Education Officers (REOs): under the Regional (RAS). Coordinate implementation of the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP), oversee local planning, and produce monitoring reports.
District level	**District Education Officers:** Provide a direct line between schools and district offices, monitor Whole School Development Plans (WSDPs), and hold regular performance review meetings with heads of schools. They translate and monitor policy implementation, working with school quality assurance officers.
Ward level	**Ward Education Officers /Coordinators:** Supervise schools at the ward level, support Heads of Schools, and assess school management, teacher performance, and student outcomes. Conduct school supervision and support Heads of Schools in implementing Whole School Plans.
School level	**School Management Teams:** Led by Heads of Schools/Headmasters and including Deputies, Academic Masters, Discipline Masters, and School Accountants. Responsible for planning, budgeting, performance monitoring, property management, and financial accountability.
	School Management Committees: Represent parents and communities in school decision-making. In Zanzibar, the committee is chaired by the Sheha[1].
	Student Leadership Bodies: Roles such as Head Boy/Girl and committee leaders contribute to governance, discipline, and student engagement.

Source: ACSL (2025) Mapping Report

Heads of schools possess limited autonomy on leadership functions. On the mainland, they may consult with ward and district authorities. In Zanzibar, decisions regarding staff discipline remain centralised at the ministry level. Ongoing reforms aim to expand autonomy, though accountability and capacity challenges remain. A MoEST respondent noted: «School leaders have some autonomy regarding instructional issues, but they are expected to consult ward authorities, parents, and district officers. They act within the

[1] Local leader of the Shehia, the most devolved administrative authority under the Regional Administration Act, 2014

framework of school guidelines.» Further, a MoEVT official added: «School leaders currently have limited autonomy—they can supervise staff and make proposals, but decisions rest with the ministry. Reforms are being developed to expand autonomy, though there are concerns about bias and misuse of power".

b) Policies, framework and guidelines for school leaders

The policy environment is anchored in the Education Act, Education and Training Policy, and Five-Year Education Sector Development Plans, operationalised through guidelines and circulars.

- Mainland Tanzania: Governed by the National Education Act (1978), amended in 1995, 2002, and 2016, alongside the Education and Training Policy (2014, revised 2023).
- Zanzibar: Regulated by the Education Act (1982, amended 1993) and the 2006 Zanzibar education policy, which translates the goals of Vision 2020 and Mkakati wa Kukuza Uchumi na Kupunguza Umasikini Zanzibar (MKUZA) into an actionable framework.

Although Tanzania does not currently have a unified national framework that explicitly defines school leadership, the School Leadership Manual developed by the Agency for the Development of Education Management (ADEM) offers a foundational perspective for school leadership in primary schools. It conceptualises school leadership as a combination of three interrelated domains: leadership, management, and governance. Leadership refers to the ability to inspire, guide, and unite staff and students around shared goals. Management focuses on the coordination of teaching, learning, and day-to-day school operations. Governance emphasises compliance with national laws, policies, and ethical standards (ADEM, 2023).

Within this framework, the head of school is recognised as the central figure in school leadership. Their role extends beyond administrative oversight to actively influence the school's direction and climate. Effective school leaders are expected to lead, by example in teaching practices, motivate both staff and students, and foster a culture of continuous improvement. They are also responsible for identifying and resolving challenges, managing conflict constructively, driving innovation, and promoting unity within the school community.

Sound decision-making and clear communication are also emphasised as core functions of school leaders. A deep understanding of the school's context, including the needs of staff, learners, and the surrounding communities, is essential for applying appropriate leadership strategies. Ultimately, the goal of school leadership is to build a shared sense of purpose and to create an environment conducive to student achievement and professional growth.

Importantly, effective school leadership is anchored in ten core governance principles: participation, rule of law, transparency, accountability, integrity, equity, consensus-building, efficiency, timely service delivery, and collective decision-making. These principles serve as a compass for school leaders, ensuring that their actions are ethically grounded, inclusive, and responsive to the evolving needs of the education system. In line with the guidelines for school supervision used in Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar, the responsibilities of head of schools include:

Table 2: Key role and responsibilities of heads of schools

Responsibility	Description
Setting expectations and objectives	The head of school plays a central role in shaping the strategic direction of the school. They are responsible for overseeing the formulation and implementation of the Whole School Development Plans (WSDP), ensuring alignment with the broader Education Sector Plan. This includes preparing the WSDP, submitting required school data to the Ward Education Officer, and participating in the development of school budgets that reflect national and local education priorities.
Enhancing teaching and learning	A key responsibility of the head of school is to ensure high-quality teaching and learning. This involves supervising curriculum implementation, conducting both administrative and pedagogical supervision, reviewing classroom practices, and providing feedback to teachers. Heads of schools are also expected to lead the introduction of innovations and support continuous improvement in teaching methodologies, as outlined in the 2023 education guidance.
Promoting collaboration	Heads of school are tasked with fostering a collaborative school culture. This includes promoting teamwork and coordinating the efforts of various stakeholders—teachers, non-teaching staff, students, school committees, parents, and the wider community—in school development activities. They are also responsible for facilitating and supporting inter-school collaborations to share resources and best practices.
Supporting staff development	Heads of school play a vital role in the professional growth of school staff. They are expected to identify the school's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) needs, integrate CPD activities into the SDP, and actively support teacher development through observation, mentoring, and facilitation of training sessions.
Upholding professional ethics	As school supervisors, heads of schools are expected to model ethical behavior and uphold professional standards. This includes acting with honesty, transparency, and integrity; maintaining confidentiality; showing respect for all individuals with managerial responsibilities; and serving as role models to teachers, students, and the community. Further, under the 2018 Teachers Professional Board Act of Mainland Tanzania, all teachers—including those in school leadership—are required to comply with the Code of Conduct and Ethics established by the Teachers Professional Board (Article 67).
Additional Responsibilities	Heads of school are also responsible for ensuring that education in the school is inclusive and responsive to diversity. They oversee management issues such as human and financial resources and ensure that cross-cutting issues—such as environmental education, gender equality, and HIV and AIDS awareness—are integrated into the teaching and learning process. Moreover, they are accountable for maintaining and improving school performance in terms of access, retention, equity, and the development of students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Source: (MoEST, 2017)

c) Professional development in policies and plans

Tanzania has integrated professional development for school leaders into key education policies and plans.

The 2019–2021 Teacher Deployment Strategy and 2020 Deployment Guidelines support training for heads of school in teacher management and performance appraisal. Focus is on effective teacher management practices and performance appraisal systems. The 2023 Head Teacher's Manual is used in leadership training for primary school heads (ADEM, 2023). `

The 2016/17–2020/21 Education Sector Development Plan further strengthens leadership capacity in planning, budgeting, supervision, and gender-responsive practices. It emphasizes training in gender equity, dropout prevention, school planning, budgeting, and teacher supervision. These efforts are reinforced in the ongoing revision of the 2014 Education and Training Policy.

The MEWAKA-National Framework for Teacher Continuous Professional Development (TCPD), implemented by the Ministry's Teacher Education Unit, provides a national platform for Continuous Professional Development (CPD), with structured opportunities for both pre-service and in-service leaders. The Community of Learning (COL) guideline, under development, seeks to create peer-to-peer learning networks for Heads of Schools and Ward Education Officers, enabling the sharing of lessons learned and leadership practices.

The 2017/18–2021/22 Zanzibar Education Development Plan aligns with the Zanzibar Education Development Plan (2006), incorporating leadership, management, and public health awareness training.

The system emphasizes in-service training for Heads of Schools and Assistant Heads, complemented by mentoring from regional and district education officers.

Stakeholders highlighted that while policy frameworks provide clear guidance, implementation is uneven. Access to training is often constrained in rural and remote areas, and many school leaders rely heavily on experiential learning, mentorship, and peer support. A MoEVT official observed: "Leaders start their roles with minimal formal preparation. Much of their learning occurs through mentoring, peer guidance, and hands-on problem-solving at school level."

d) Career pathways and accession to leadership

Career progression into school leadership in Tanzania is a structured but multi-faceted process that combines academic qualifications, professional experience, and performance evaluations. The trajectory for school leaders typically progresses from classroom teacher to section leader, assistant head teacher, and eventually head teacher. Appointment criteria emphasize qualifications and professional experience, with ministry inspectors assessing performance in government schools. Private schools generally rely on internal appointments.

In Mainland Tanzania, appointments are guided by the Education (Schools and General Provisions) Regulations (2002), which outline eligibility criteria, selection procedures, and responsibilities. Primary school Heads are appointed by Local Government Authority Directors, while secondary school Heads are appointed by Regional Administrative Secretaries. In Zanzibar, appointments of HTs and AHTs are made by the Director of Secondary Education under MoEVT, while other school leadership roles are assigned internally.

Eligibility criteria include:

- A minimum of a diploma for primary school heads and a degree for secondary school heads.
- At least five years of teaching experience at the relevant level.
- A clean disciplinary record and evidence of ethical behavior.
- Demonstrated leadership or management capabilities in public service.
- Proficiency in digital tools for administration and instruction.

An ADEM representative noted: "Most school leaders are appointed based on educational qualifications such as Master's degrees or PhDs, but there is no assurance they possess the practical skills for leadership or management. "A KII with MoEVT highlighted the role of experiential learning in leadership preparation: "Once appointed, leaders often start immediately, learning through experience, mentorship, and peer guidance. Formal training is complemented by on-the-job learning, which is critical for developing practical leadership skills."

Performance and professional assessment play a central role in career progression. Heads of Schools and Assistant Heads are evaluated based on student learning outcomes, teacher supervision, and overall school performance. Recommendations from inspectors, District Education Officers, and existing Heads of schools inform promotion decisions.

In Mainland Tanzania, the Education Sector Development Plan anticipates revising recruitment criteria to require pre-service certification in school leadership and management, ensuring all school heads receive formal preparation before assuming their roles. This represents a shift toward professionalization of leadership, linking career pathways with both formal training and practical

e) Gender and equity considerations

Gender and equity are recognized as key dimensions of school leadership policy in Tanzania, reflecting the broader national agenda to promote inclusive education and equal opportunities for all. Both Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar have policies and frameworks that address representation, inclusivity, and equitable access to leadership positions, though practical implementation varies across regions.

In Mainland Tanzania, the 2022 Guidelines on the Selection of Education Leaders explicitly prohibit discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religion, or geographic location. The Education Sector Development Plan emphasizes the need to strengthen women's participation in school leadership, while the MKUKUTA (National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty) Strategy and affirmative action policies aim to reduce gender disparities in public service, including headship positions. Factors contributing to this underrepresentation include cultural norms, family responsibilities, and limited support for women in rural or remote areas. One female Head teacher stated, "Being a woman leader in a rural school is challenging—there is constant pressure from family and community, but mentorship has been crucial to my growth."

Female leaders face additional challenges, including cultural expectations, maternity-related absenteeism, and limitations in accessing professional development opportunities at certain times (e.g., during Ramadan). Rural and marginalized teachers often experience limited access to leadership roles, with incentives and policies aimed at retention in underserved areas showing mixed effectiveness, as noted by PMO-RALG and MoEST representatives.

PMO-RALG highlighted systemic inequities: "Rural schools face challenges retaining teachers due to distance and resource limitations. Female leaders remain scarce, affecting equity between urban and rural schools." A MoEST representative emphasized cultural challenges:

In some urban areas, women are even more educated than men, and initiatives such as gender clubs exist in schools. However, very few women hold leadership positions. Cultural norms strongly discourage women from taking up such roles, as many are expected to follow their husbands, focus on family responsibilities, or step back due to pregnancy. Personal attitudes also play a role, with some female teachers refusing leadership positions because they would require them to be away from their families.

In Zanzibar, female representation in school leadership is relatively stronger, with over 30% of Heads of Schools (HT and AHT) being women. The policy emphasizes inclusivity for disadvantaged groups, including learners with special educational needs. Nevertheless, the autonomy of school leaders is limited, and women's access to leadership in rural or under-resourced schools remains constrained. According to a MoEVT respondent: "School leaders currently have limited autonomy. They can supervise staff and make proposals, but decisions rest with the ministry. Reforms are being developed to expand autonomy, but there are concerns about potential bias and misuse of power, which could affect female leaders disproportionately."

Equity considerations extend beyond gender to include teachers from rural and marginalized communities. Career pathways for school leaders require professional qualifications, teaching experience, and demonstrated performance, which can disadvantage teachers in remote areas with limited access to training and professional development. A KII with PMO-RALG highlighted this challenge: "Targeted support is directed toward rural districts perceived as disadvantaged, but in reality, some areas already have adequate resources. Teachers often avoid postings in remote regions, and few women are willing to relocate, limiting equitable representation."

Professional development initiatives, including MEWAKA, ADEM training, and the Community of Learning (COL) platform, have integrated gender-responsive modules and inclusive leadership practices. Leaders are encouraged to foster equitable school environments, manage diversity, and implement policies that support learners with SEN and other marginalized groups.

3.2. School leadership practices and professional development

This section explores current initiatives in school leadership development, including in-service and induction programmes, outlines the structure and reach of the ongoing School Leadership in service programmes, highlights the key providers involved in delivering leadership development, and identifies remaining gaps and opportunities for improvement.

a) School leadership practices

School heads in Tanzania are mandated to set the strategic direction of their institutions, oversee the development and implementation of Whole School Development Plans (WSDPs), and ensure alignment with national education priorities (MoEST, 2017). Their responsibilities extend to enhancing teaching and learning through administrative and pedagogical supervision, promoting collaboration among school actors, supporting teacher professional development, and modelling professional ethics in line with the Teachers Professional Board Act. Heads of schools also manage human and financial resources, uphold inclusive education practices, and integrate cross-cutting issues such as gender, environmental education, and HIV and AIDS awareness into school operations. These expectations form the foundation against which differences in leadership practices across regions can be understood.

In practice, head teachers oversee the entirety of school operations, from teaching and student discipline to managing resources, coordinating with the ministry, and representing the school in the community. Day-to-day responsibilities include planning, coordinating activities, resolving conflicts, mobilizing parents and community members, implementing directives from the ministry, and supervising curriculum delivery. Leaders also navigate local cultural contexts. For instance, in coastal regions, community attitudes can affect girls' education, requiring Head teachers to carefully balance policy mandates with culturally sensitive practices. Leaders also frequently teach themselves; as one HT said, "I sometimes teach up to twenty periods a week because we don't have enough teachers." Assistant head teachers support management tasks and step in when the Head teacher is absent. Leaders cited challenges including high teacher turnover, resistance to authority, demanding parents, and students struggling with absenteeism and discipline. "Some parents do not respect school rules and refuse to engage constructively," explained one HT.

Analysis of positive deviant schools (UNICEF Innocenti, MoEST, et al., 2024; UNICEF Innocenti, MoEVT, et al., 2024), shows differences between Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar. Mainland schools focus more on instructional leadership: teacher capacity-building, classroom monitoring, and community mobilisation. One leader described, "We focus on motivating teachers and tracking student performance. Community actors help us improve learning conditions." Zanzibar schools emphasise strategic planning, transparent governance, and financial oversight. As one DEO explained, "In Zanzibar, head teachers strictly follow WSDPs, monitor teacher and learner attendance, and maintain safe school environments. We meet regularly with schools to coordinate resources and support leadership."

The inspectorate corroborates these findings. In Zanzibar, inspectors assess leadership against eight standards, including vision and planning, student performance analysis, internal inspections, resource use, role modelling, teamwork, professional development, and stakeholder collaboration. Inspectors observed that schools with strong, transparent, and participatory leadership performed better, while laissez-faire approaches negatively affected outcomes. "Schools with supportive HTs who involve teachers in planning and decision-making perform better academically," noted an inspector.

b) Leadership preparation and professional development

Tanzania has made significant strides in promoting the professional development of education leaders through a combination of pre-service training, induction programs, in-service training, and donor-supported initiatives. This section outlines the major programs currently available, their scope, delivery mechanisms, and institutional frameworks. These initiatives are largely coordinated by national and local institutions, with ADEM serving as the primary provider.

1. Pre-service

1. Certificate in Education Leadership, Management, and Administration (CELMA)

This one-year programme targets in-service teachers or education officers working in government or non-government institutions with a minimum of two years of experience and they are also required to being a teacher by qualification. The course fee is approximately TZS 645,000. This programme runs for one year into two semesters. It is offered in all Campuses through Open and Distance Learning (ODL), or Residential Modes. It is structured into two semesters and aims to prepare participants to effectively contribute to school improvement and quality education delivery.

The purpose of the qualification is to enable participants to carry out key leadership and administrative functions within schools. These include planning for school development, supervising teaching and learning activities, resolving conflicts, mobilising and managing school resources, creating safe and inclusive learning environments, and designing as well as implementing school-based projects.

In the first semester, learners complete six modules: Basic Computer Applications, Study and Communication Skills, School Leadership and Quality Assurance, School Development Planning, Guidance and Counselling in Education Institutions, and Field Practice. The second semester comprises another six modules: Bookkeeping and Storekeeping for Schools, Resource Mobilisation Skills, Inclusive Education, Education in Emergencies, Supervision of Curriculum Implementation, and Literacy and Numeracy Skills.

2. Diploma in Educational Leadership Management, and Administration (DELMA)

This two-year programme, structured into four semesters of 15 weeks each, is designed to equip in-service teachers, school heads, and educational managers and administrators operating at ward, district, regional, or zonal levels with advanced skills in leadership, management, and school quality assurance.

Applicants must have a minimum of three years of professional experience in the education sector and meet at least one of the following academic qualifications: a Grade A Teacher Certificate with a minimum of four passes in the Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (CSEE); a Diploma or bachelor's degree in education; or a Certificate in Education Leadership, Management, and Administration (CELMA).

Delivered fully in-person at ADEM campuses through residential sessions, the programme aims to develop educational leaders who can contribute meaningfully to the national education agenda. In the first year, participants engage in foundational modules including curriculum supervision, school management, ethics, ICT fundamentals, and managerial communication in both English and Kiswahili. The second year deepens this foundation with a focus on institutional leadership, quality assurance practices, school development planning, financial and resource management, and inclusive education.

Eligible in-service educators may apply for study leave to attend the programme. The course fee is approximately TZS 885,000 per year. Through the Foundations for Learning (F4L) project (2020–2025), the Scholarships are available through the Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development, East Africa (AKU-IED, EA) partnered with ADEM for selected school leaders. In 2024, 47 school heads graduated from the programme with support from AKU-IED, EA.

3. Diploma in School Quality Assurance (DSQA)

The Diploma in School Quality Assurance (DSQA) is a two-year programme designed for teachers with at least three years of experience and relevant academic qualifications. The DSQA programme aims to strengthen the professional capacity of teachers involved in inspection and evaluation roles within primary schools, secondary schools, teachers' colleges, community development colleges, and vocational training institutions. The course fee is approximately TZS 885,000 per year. In the first year, the programme focuses on foundational skills such as quality assurance, educational research, curriculum evaluation, and project planning. Key modules cover communication skills, school quality management systems, guidance and counselling, mathematics, and ICT applications. The second-year builds on this foundation, with an emphasis on advanced quality assurance practices, including educational data management, total quality management, education policy implementation, performance management, and coaching and mentoring in schools.

All ADEM diploma programmes offered are officially accredited by the National Council for Technical Education (NECTA). Given the cost of the programme, several organizations have stepped in to support participants, especially on the diploma programmes. In addition to sponsorship from the Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development, East Africa (AKU-IED, EA), Embrace Relief supports female educators in accessing these opportunities. These institutions including Educate (R.I.S.E.) programme, which empowers female teachers to become school administrators or supervisors through a structured two-year training pathway. The first cohort of 24 female educators graduated in August 2023, and a second cohort of 24 female educators is set to graduate in August 2025.

Alongside these diploma programmes, ADEM also offers a variety of short courses designed to strengthen leadership and governance skills among key education stakeholders. These courses target specific roles such as heads of primary and secondary schools, regional and district education officers, school inspectors, ward education officers, principals of teacher training colleges, and private school proprietors.

2. Induction programme

Induction training is a mandatory requirement for all newly appointed public servants in Tanzania, including school heads, as stipulated in the 2009 Public Service Standing Orders and reinforced by a 2011 Ministry of Education circular. More specifically, the order emphasizes that every public servant who is serving in a supervisory capacity has a duty to assist in training and developing junior public servants. The purpose of these induction programmes is to provide new education leaders with orientation on public service laws, codes of conduct, and institutional frameworks. The content typically includes modules on education policy, school governance, leadership ethics, and administrative procedures. The induction training is delivered by city councils and other local authorities. Despite these requirements, recent studies such as Micheal & Kitula (2022) have reported gaps in implementation, with many newly appointed heads of schools indicating they had not received induction or any form of structured continuous professional development. Group discussions revealed that many leaders assume their roles without formal orientation or structured preparation. One head teacher explained, “When I was appointed, there was no training or induction. I learned everything on the job, by observing peers and trial and error.” Another noted, “Professional development only comes later, often through programmes like Aga Khan Foundation trainings, which are ad hoc and not systematic.”

3. In-service

In-service training is primarily delivered by NGOs and focuses on leadership development for leaders at various levels in both primary and secondary schools. All organisations operate under the mandate of government institutions, particularly ADEM.

1. Leaders in Teaching Tanzania – LEAD pillar activities

This initiative aims to support the professional development of school leaders and education officers through a phased, blended-learning model. It targets all 5,440 secondary schools in Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, impacting more than 2.8 million students. The programme aims to train over 11,000 school leaders, 4,000 ward education officials, 180 district education officers, and 30 regional education officers by 2030. Special attention is being given to supporting the leadership capacity of female educators in underserved regions, such as Kigoma. Training will be rolled out in cohorts of 18 districts per round, covering around 550 schools per cohort, and combining online learning with in-person sessions and professional learning communities.

2. BOOST Project

Effective school leadership and management for primary school managers and head of schools. The programme is being implemented under the **BOOST Project for Strengthening Teaching and Learning in Pre-Primary and Primary Schools,** funded by the World Bank. Through ADEM's leadership, this initiative has already trained over 6,700 heads of schools in its first phase, with an additional 4,000 leaders expected to be trained in the second phase. The training covers key areas such as school improvement planning, financial management, teaching supervision, safeguarding, and community engagement. In support of this initiative, ADEM has published two key manuals—The School Management Manual and The Education Good Governance Manual—which are used to guide training and local government oversight. ADEM has also led capacity-building efforts for 17,817 head of schools across all 26 regions of Mainland Tanzania through this project on the manual.

3. Community of Learning

Through Shule Bora Programme, Cambridge Education in collaboration with ADEM have also trained Head teachers and WEOs on strengthening Instructional leadership through Community of Learning (CoL) for education leaders. Currently, they are still working with Development Impact Evaluation Unit (DIME) on Capacitating COL coordinators in 9 regions where Shule Bora is operating. Shule Bora is a 5-year (2022–2027), national education programme to improve the quality of pre-primary and primary schools in Tanzania.

3.3. Research and researchers in school leadership

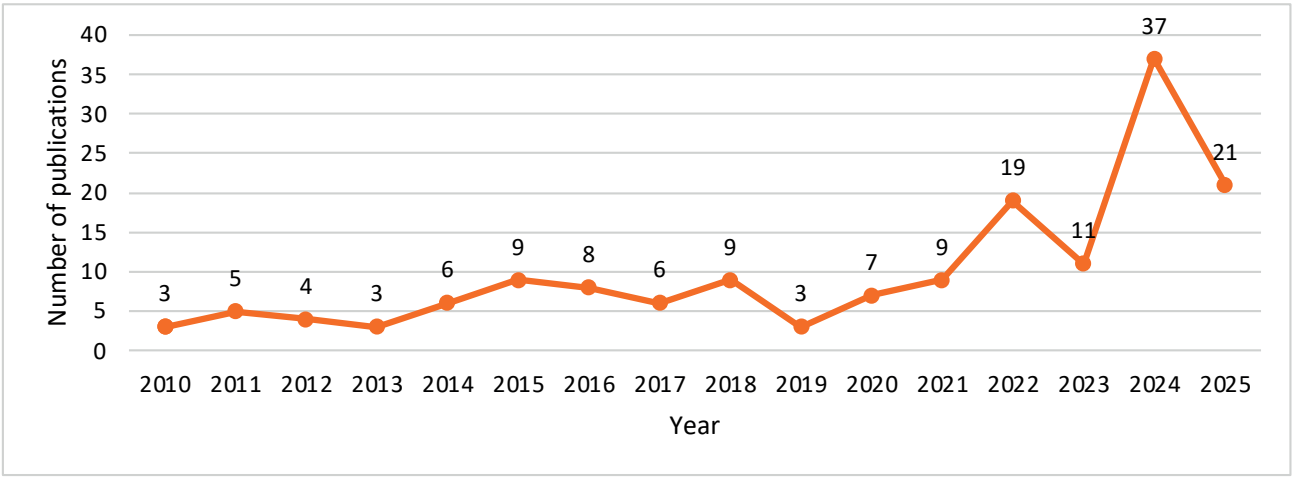
This section presents an overview of research on school leadership in Tanzania. It explores the main themes covered in the literature, highlights key researchers and institutional networks involved, and examines the motivations and funding sources behind existing studies.



a) Overview of included studies

A comprehensive desk review identified 161 research outputs produced between 2010 and 2025 (i.e. 2025 publications searched between January and June), sourced from the African Education Research Database (AERD), Scopus, Web of Science, institutional repositories in mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, and grey literature from universities and civil society organisations.

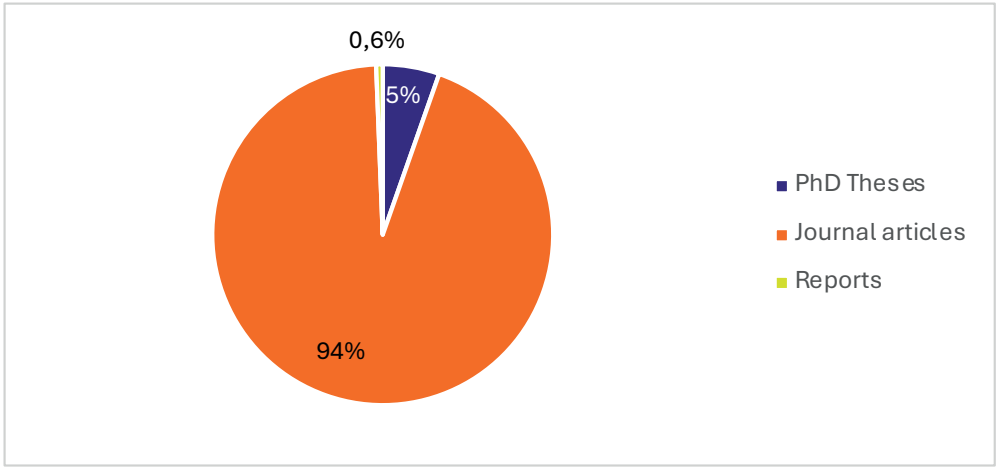
Figure 2: School Leadership Research publications per year (Tanzania)



The research landscape reveals a steadily expanding body of scholarship on school leadership, particularly in the years following 2022. This growth reflects mounting recognition of leadership as central to educational improvement. As one academic noted, “Curriculum changes have sharpened our focus because teachers cannot deliver new expectations if leadership is weak.” (Focus Group Discussion, Dar es salaam)

Despite this momentum, the evidence base remains uneven and institutionally narrow. Journal articles dominate, constituting 94 percent of all mapped outputs, while grey literature remains minimal, with only one formal report identified.

Figure 3: Distribution of Publication Types in Tanzania



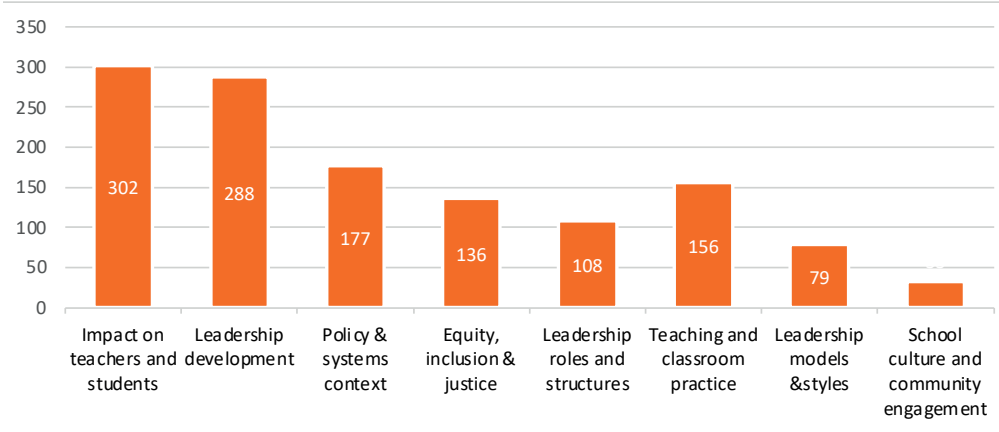
Note: Base = Total research outputs analysed, 161.

Contributions come primarily from a few public universities especially the University of Dar es Salaam and the University of Dodoma, indicating that school leadership research has not yet diffused broadly across the higher education and practitioner ecosystem. A stakeholder noted that “The people closest to schools rarely have opportunities to publish, so their knowledge stays hidden.” (Focus Group Discussion, Dar es salaam)

b) Thematic areas identified

Each publication was analysed for metadata including authorship, gender, institutional affiliation, thematic focus, methodology, funding sources and attention to equity dimensions such as gender, disability and rurality using a thematic coding framework aligned with eight domains of school leadership research (ASCL, 2025). Figure 3 below illustrates the thematic analysis of the 161 research outputs reviewed. The results show that many publications were linked to more than one theme, highlighting the multi-dimensional focus of school leadership research in Tanzania.

Figure 4: Analysis of the research outputs in Tanzania

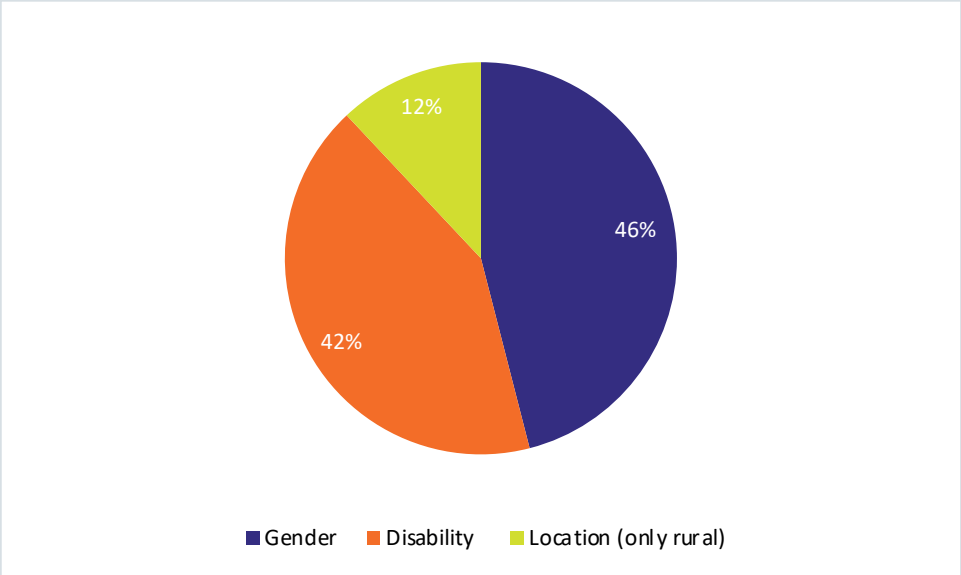


Note: *Base = Research outputs analysed by year of publication, 161.*
Key: *The numbers on the map refer to the frequency of pre-identified keywords related to each thematic area, indicating the frequency at which a certain theme has been explored (reflected in the frequency of its associated keywords*

The findings reveal that studies focusing on the “impact of leadership on teachers and students” and “leadership development” are the two most researched areas, followed closely by studies on “Policy and systems”, as well as “Teaching and classroom practice”. Themes such as “Equity, inclusion and justice” demonstrate growing attention to social and educational fairness. On the other hand, fewer studies were focusing on “leadership models and styles”, “Leadership roles and structures”, and “School culture and community engagement”, indicating areas with potential for further exploration. Thematic patterns reveal concentration in several dominant areas: instructional leadership, leadership development, teacher performance, and policy implementation. These emphases mirror ongoing national concerns around teacher effectiveness, accountability and curriculum reform.

However, several essential areas remain largely unexplored. Leadership models and styles, governance structures, school culture, community engagement, and distributed leadership receive limited attention. Geographic imbalance is stark: while gender (46 percent) and disability (42 percent) receive moderate coverage, only 12 percent of studies focus on rural leadership. As multiple stakeholders observed, “Leadership challenges in rural areas are still invisible in most research, yet they are the most acute.” (Focus Group Discussion, Dodoma) These gaps limit understanding of how leadership functions across the varied contexts that characterise Tanzania’s education system.

Figure 5: Inequality indicators in school leadership research

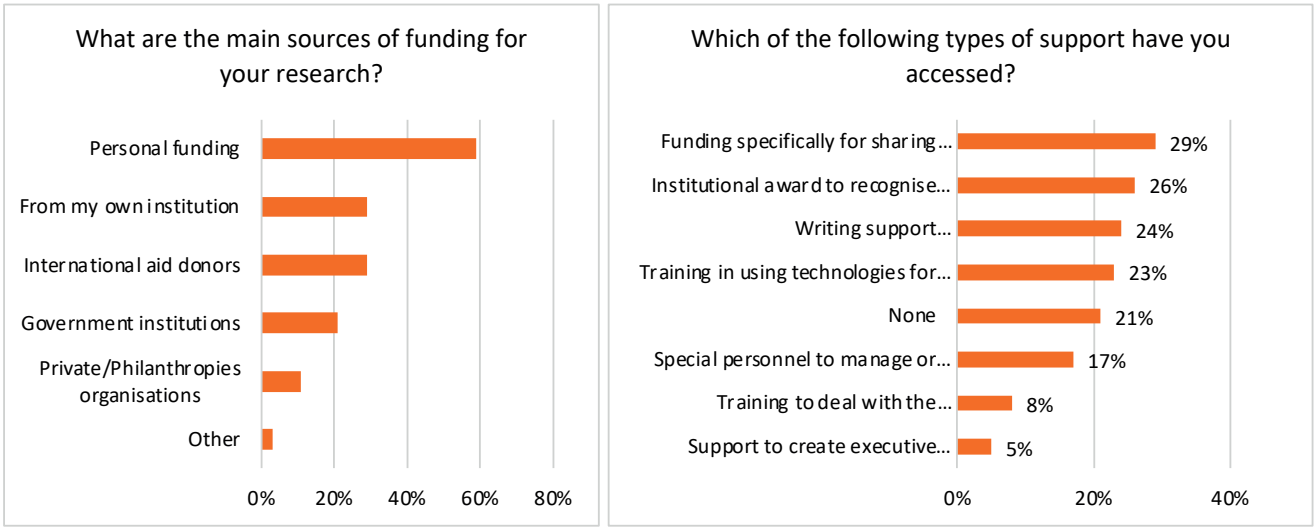


Across surveys, interviews and workshop dialogues, several emerging priorities stood out consistently. Instructional leadership was identified as central to supporting curriculum reform. Digital leadership and ICT integration, heightened by the growth of online learning and new technologies such as AI—were also seen as pressing needs. Inclusive and gender-responsive leadership, teacher and student well-being, leadership ethics and crisis preparedness were repeatedly emphasised.
A notable but overlooked theme concerns student leadership. Stakeholders explained that “student leaders often hold the school together in ways we do not always acknowledge,” yet research scarcely addresses their roles or development pathways. (Focus Group Discussion, Dar es salaam)

c) Research on school leadership

The findings highlight a highly motivated and knowledgeable research community. Nearly half of the surveyed researchers hold PhDs, and many have practical experience as teachers, school leaders or education officers, giving them rich contextual grounding. Their motivations are deeply moral and professional. As one researcher explained, “Research is how we help policymakers see what is actually happening in schools,” while another described it as “giving back to the system that shaped us.” (Focus Group Discussion, Dar es salaam).

Figure 6: Financial and non-financial support



Base: Count of respondents, N=66

Yet these motivations often clash with systemic barriers. A majority 59 percent self-fund their research because institutional research budgets are scarce and donor funding rarely prioritises leadership (see Figure 6). One participant noted that "Leadership rarely appears as a standalone funding priority—it is usually hidden under teacher or school improvement agendas." (Focus Group Discussion, Dar es salaam)

Heavy teaching loads, limited mentorship structures, and persistent gender disparities with men accounting for 62 percent of first authors further constrain productivity and diversity in the field.

Collaboration remains limited, often informal and rarely sustained. Most partnerships occur within Tanzania but tend to rely on personal relationships rather than institutional frameworks. Intra-African collaboration is remarkably low, representing only 4 percent of mapped outputs, while partnerships with actors outside Africa account for 16 percent, typically enabled by international funding streams. One stakeholder summarised the challenge succinctly: "International partnerships offer visibility and resources, but local and regional collaborations are harder to sustain because they lack institutional support." (Focus Group Discussion, Dodoma). Only a quarter of surveyed researchers belong to any leadership or education research network, restricting opportunities for mentorship, methodological exchange and professional community building.

A major finding concerns limited dissemination and weak knowledge translation mechanisms. Fewer than half of researchers have published in peer-reviewed journals, and Kiswahili dissemination remains sparse, reducing accessibility for practitioners and policy actors. Researchers frequently voiced frustration, with one remarking that "Valuable insights die in dissertations because there are few spaces to share them." (Focus Group Discussion, Dodoma)

These dissemination gaps undermine policy influence. Engagement between researchers and policymakers is often ad hoc, and evidence is not routinely embedded in decision-making processes. According to one government official "Even when policymakers are interested, the channels for using research in decision-making are not formalised." (Focus Group Discussion, Dodoma)

d) National research agenda

The national validation workshop produced Tanzania's first comprehensive school leadership research agenda. Participants prioritised five core areas: instructional leadership for curriculum reform; ICT integration and digital leadership; inclusive and equitable leadership; effective leadership models; and collaborative and partnership-oriented leadership. Additional priorities included mentorship and coaching, community engagement, crisis leadership, recruitment and promotion, and data use for decision-making.

Participants emphasised that the resulting agenda is "The first nationally endorsed school leadership research agenda," marking an important milestone in aligning evidence production with national leadership development needs. (National Validation workshop, Dar es salaam)

Table 3: Selected national research Agenda Priorities

Priority Level	Research Agenda
Core Priorities (Top 5)	Instructional Leadership
	ICT Integration in School Leadership
	Inclusion and Equity in Leadership
	Best Practices and Models of Effective Leadership
	Partnerships and Collaboration
Secondary Priorities	Mentorship and Coaching
	Recruitment, Appointment & Promotion
	Community Engagement
	Leadership in Times of Crisis
	Data Use in Decision-Making

Source: ACSL (2025) Mapping Report

3.4. Stakeholders and sector coordination in school leadership

School leadership policy and practice in Tanzania involves multiple actors, including government ministries, development partners, NGOs, and professional associations. Effective coordination occurs through structured engagement among MOEST, PMO - RALG, ADEM, and key partners. Stakeholder meetings, Technical Working Groups, and the Education Sector Development Committee (co-chaired by MOEST and PMO - RALG) provide platforms for policy dialogue, planning, and capacity-building.

ADEM links with universities through board representation, facilitating cross-institutional dialogue. NGOs and donors such as UNICEF, UNESCO, Shule Bora, the World Bank, and KOICA provide training, technical support, and CPD programme, although coordination remains uneven and CSO contributions to policy are limited.

Information dissemination primarily occurs through district-level trainings rather than online platforms. Community engagement is supported by SQAO and district officers, who involve parents in training and assessments. Challenges include weak feedback of district-level data into national policy, limited sharing of best practices, and Zanzibar's low participation in regional leadership forums.

Emerging structures, such as the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) Board, aim to enhance coherence in teacher and school-leadership PD.

Table 4: Key stakeholders in school leadership

Type	Institution	Role
Government	Agency for the Development of Education Management (ADEM)	Leads training and research in education management; provides short and long courses for school leaders
Government	Prime Minister – Regional Administation and Local Government (PMO - RALG)	Oversees deployment, accountability, and capacity-building of regional/district officials; coordinates with stakeholders
Government	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST)	Develops national policies, approves curricula, and co-chairs sector committees

Government	Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE)	Provides curriculum guidance; develops training content and manuals for pre-primary, basic, and teacher education
Government	National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA)	Manages assessment, certification, and quality assurance
Government	City Councils & Local Government Authorities (LGAs)	Implements induction training; monitors CPD compliance at school level
Government	Teacher Professional Development (TPD) Board	Emerging national platform for coordinating teacher and leadership PD
Government	Education Quality Assurance Office (SQAO)	Supports school assessments, community engagement, and monitoring
Government / Academic	Universities (e.g., University of Dar es Salaam, Ardhi University)	Provide research, training, and linkage with ADEM
Professional Association	Tanzania Heads of Secondary Schools Association (TAHOSSA)	Represents school leaders; contributes to leadership training and advocacy
NGO	Shule Bora Programme	Supports CPD, instructional leadership, and school improvement initiatives
NGO / Bilateral Donor	Good Neighbors / KOICA project	Implements school leadership initiatives, especially in Zanzibar
Bilateral Donor / NGO	UNICEF	Technical support, capacity building, and policy advisory
Bilateral Donor	World Bank	Provides funding, training support, and policy guidance

Source: ACSL (2025) Mapping Report

4. Discussion and conclusion

The mapping shows that Tanzania has made meaningful progress in strengthening school leadership through policy reforms, professional development initiatives, and institutional support. Existing tools including the School Leadership Manual and the MEWAKA TCPD Framework provide a solid foundation, while programmes delivered by ADEM and partners have expanded access to both pre-service and in-service training. Efforts to build Communities of Learning and promote gender equity further demonstrate a growing commitment to inclusive and practice-focused leadership development.

At the same time, significant challenges persist. Tanzania's research ecosystem is expanding but remains fragmented and overly reliant on individual effort. Research outputs are concentrated within a few universities, while limited engagement from government institutions and CSOs constrains the production of practice oriented evidence. Important thematic areas such as rural leadership, school culture, distributed leadership, and crisis leadership, remain underexplored, leaving gaps in understanding the realities of leadership across diverse school contexts.

Also, the need on the development/adoption of school leadership frameworks, development of school leadership standards, aligning recruitment selection criteria with needs, researching ways to increase female representation in rural areas, standardising/exchanging best practices between Mainland and Zanzibar.

Weak collaboration locally, nationally, and regionally limits knowledge sharing and the development of robust research communities. Moreover, the link between research and policymaking remains weak due to limited dissemination (especially in Kiswahili) and the absence of structured mechanisms for translating evidence into practice. As a result, valuable research seldom informs leadership standards, professional development, or school improvement strategies.

The co-created National Research Agenda represents a major opportunity to address these challenges by aligning priorities, mobilising resources, and strengthening coordination. Its impact will depend on institutionalisation within MoEST, PMO-RALG, ADEM, and other key bodies, accompanied by sustained funding and systematic implementation.

Overall, Tanzania has foundations to build on, including support policy and professional development structures. With a committed research community, growing knowledge base, and renewed national focus on school leadership, the foundations are strong. By strengthening coordination, enhancing professional development, deepening collaboration, and institutionalising evidence use, Tanzania can build a more coherent, inclusive, and effective school leadership system—one capable of driving improved teaching, learning, and educational equity. Nonetheless, challenges remain. Gaps in induction training, disparities in access to CPD opportunities, and limited implementation at the local level suggest the need for stronger coordination, accountability mechanisms, and sustainable financing models. Moving forward, aligning professional development with national planning and ensuring consistent delivery at scale will be critical.

On the research, the mapping demonstrates that Tanzania is at a pivotal moment in strengthening its school leadership ecosystem. The country possesses a growing and committed research community, a strong base of knowledge, and a now nationally validated research agenda. Yet significant gaps remain in funding, capacity, coordination, dissemination, and policy uptake. Addressing these gaps will require deliberate investment, institutional support, and stronger partnerships between universities, government agencies, CSOs, and international networks.

A more coherent, inclusive, and coordinated research system—one that values local knowledge, supports diverse researchers, and links evidence to policy and practice—will be essential for advancing effective school leadership. By embracing the research agenda, strengthening capacity, and institutionalising evidence use, Tanzania has the opportunity to position school leadership as a transformative force for teaching quality, learning outcomes, and educational equity.

5. Recommendations

The recommendations presented below reflect the priority areas identified through the mapping process. These have been further translated into a detailed implementation roadmap with timelines, milestones, and responsible institutions which is included in the Annex. The roadmap provides a structured guide for operationalising these recommendations at national, regional, and school levels.

1. Policy and Sector Coordination

- Update and harmonise the mainland (2014) and Zanzibar (2006) education acts and introduce clear leadership standards and codes of practice.
- Strengthen communication and dissemination so that policies and evidence reach schools in accessible formats, including Kiswahili.
- Establish a national school-leadership coordination platform led by ADEM in collaboration with ACSL, MoEST, PMO - RALG, and MOEVT.

2. Professional Development

- Introduce structured induction and continuous professional development (CPD) for school heads and deputies, integrating mentorship, coaching, and blended learning.
- Develop digitally accessible and offline modules, leveraging government-issued tablets to ensure rural inclusion.
- Standardise job descriptions and delegation structures to reduce overload and clarify leadership roles.

3. Research and Evidence Use

- Institutionalise evidence use by establishing evidence-uptake units in MoEST, PMO - RALG, MOEVT, and ADEM and by embedding data literacy in leadership training.
- Create a National Education Research Fund to support leadership research, prioritise women and underserved regions, and strengthen mentorship for emerging scholars.
- Enhance dissemination and data literacy through open-access repositories, Kiswahili policy briefs, and tools such as school dashboards and report cards.
- Establish a National Research Platform to link universities, CSOs, ministries, and regional partners.
- Monitor progress using indicators on gender equity, regional participation, collaboration, and evidence uptake.

4. Inclusion and Equity

- Increase representation of women and persons with disabilities in school leadership through better understanding of the existing barriers and how to overcome these effectively.
- Strengthen mechanisms for student participation and community engagement across public and private schools.

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7. Annex: Consolidated roadmap

The Roadmap for Strengthening School Leadership in Tanzania has been developed through a collaborative process with key stakeholders engaged in school leadership. Bringing together representatives from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), the Prime Minister's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO - RALG), the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) in Zanzibar, development partners, researchers, school leaders, and civil society organizations, the process aimed to establish a shared vision and coordinated plan of action to advance effective school leadership across the country.
The roadmap reflects the discussions shared in the validation workshop done on the 10th September, 2025, in Dar Es Salaam. The roadmap

1. Policy

The mapping data collection identified key policies and highlighted priority areas for policy refinement, and implementation. This roadmap on policy proposes a timeline of actions to strengthen the policy environment and ensure that school leadership is systematically integrated into broader education sector reforms.

Priority	Activities to address the priority	Stakeholders involved	Timeline (2025 – 2030)
Policy awareness gap among teachers and school leaders	• Sensitisation by using face to face engagements in Zanzibar and with Tanzania Heads of Secondary Schools Association (TAHOSSA) & Tanzanian Association of Primary Schools (TAPOSHA) (Mainland) • Designing communication materials such as posters, fliers, journals, manuals, etc…	• LGAs: education officials • REOs • School leaders • Association leaders • Ministerial officials • agencies	Oct 2025 – April 2026
The selection criteria for recruitment of heads of schools are not clear	• To develop the criteria that will be used • To set requirement standards • Devise mechanisms and procedures	• TSC • LGAs officials • PMO-RALG • MoEVT/MoEST • SQAOs	May 2026 – Oct 2026
No induction and career development plans for heads of schools	• Develop community of learning and guidelines • Establish TCPD programmes for school leaders	• Agencies (i.e., ADEM) • TPB • MoEVT	Oct 2026 – Jan 2027
Weak parent/ community involvement	• develop teacher parent association guidelines for secondary school leaders • To establish dialogue • Sensitisation in the ownership of the school programmes in general	• ADEM	Feb 2027 – June 2027

Low female representation in leadership	• Affirmative action plans • Mentorship and coaching for emerging female leaders	• ADEM • MoEST • MoEVT	July 2027 – Jan 2028
Outdated educational policies, not aligned with the new educational advancements	• Review educational acts, policies, guidelines and circulars.	• Commissioner office • ADEM • PMO - RALG • MoEVT • MoEST	Feb 2028 – June 2028

2. School leadership Practice and professional development

The professional development mapping focused on identifying gaps, opportunities, and synergies in school leadership professional learning. The roadmap outlines key actions to address capacity gaps, strengthen induction and continuous professional development (CPD), and improve monitoring and accountability mechanisms. It also emphasizes the need for resource mobilization, co-financing, and coherence across programmes.

Priority	Activities to address the priority	Stakeholders involved	Timeline
1. Skills Gap	1. Develop training content in a blended way / modality / Program / Package on skills gaps	VVOB, ACSL, ESSA, ADEM, TIE, ZIE, DTE, MoEVT, MoEST, PMO, Shule Bora, higher learning institutions, and, NGOs.	2026 - 2027
	2. Resource Mobilization: co-financing between government and other stakeholders		2026 -2030
	3. Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework/system.		2026 - 2027
	4. Deliver and monitor the training – using a blended modality		2026 -2030
2. No common guidelines on roles and responsibilities for school leaders	1. Review and update of guidelines on roles and responsibilities of school leaders	School Leaders, VVOB, ACSL, ESSA, ADEM, TIE, ZIE, DTE, MoEVT, MoEST, PMO, Shule Bora, Higher Learning Institutions, NGOs	2026 - 2027
	2. Disseminate the updated guidelines to all school leaders and relevant NGOs, and organisations.		2026 -2030
3. Inspectors, District Officers, and Quality Assurers not fully equipped as mentors of School leadership	Develop and coordinate and monitor	DEOs, SQAs, Subject Advisers, VVOB, ACSL, ESSA, ADEM, TIE, ZIE, DTE, MoEVT, MoEST, PMO, Shule Bora, Higher Learning Institutions, NGOs,	2026 - 2027
	Deliver the programme.		2027 -2030
	Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the program		2026 -2030

4. No clear monitoring system	Strength the monitoring system	DEOs, SQAs, Subject Advisers, VVOB, ACSL, ESSA, ADEM, TIE, ZIE, DTE, MoEVT, MoEST, PMO-RALG, Shule Bora, Higher learning institutions, NGOs	2026 -2030
5. Lack of professional preparation and induction for head school leaders	Customise the induction training for school leaders	DEOs, SQAs, Subject Advisers, VVOB, ACSL, ESSA, ADEM, TIE, ZIE, DTE, MoEVT, MoEST, PMO-RALG, Shule Bora, Higher learning institutions,	2026 - 2027
6. Weak link between PD and promotion	School leaders to attend the training by ADEM (Mandatory)	DEOs, SQAs, Subject Advisers, VVOB, ACSL, ESSA, ADEM, TIE, ZIE, DTE, MoEVT, MoEST, PMO-RALG, Shule Bora, Higher learning institutions,	2026 -2030
	Strengthen MEWAKA		2026 -2030

3. Research

The mapping of school leadership research and researchers focuses on developing and operationalizing a Tanzania School Leadership Research Agenda. This agenda, developed collaboratively during the roadmap sessions, outlines the country's priority research themes, mechanisms for coordination, and pathways for evidence utilization. The aim is to strengthen the generation and use of evidence to inform policy and practice, and to guide future research grants and investments related to school leadership in Tanzania.

Research topics:

- Instructional leadership and learning improvement
- ICT integration in school leadership
- Best practices and innovation in leadership
- Inclusive and gender-responsive leadership
- Partnerships and collaboration in school leadership

Research governance, approval, and permits

- Mainland: COSTECH (permits), PMO - RALG, TAMISEMI → RAS → DAS
- Zanzibar: Office of the Second Vice President → Sector Ministry
- Additional requirements: Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals (where applicable), local permits at regional/district level, ministry involvement, and school-level authorization
- Required documents: Passport (for foreign researchers), proposal, data collection tools, CV, passport photos, work permits, list of co-researchers, and approved permits
- Typical timeframe: 1–3 months (with fast-track options available)

Sampling and coverage

- Geographical representation: Mainland (e.g., Tabora, Kigoma, Kagera) and Zanzibar (Unguja & Pemba)
- Inclusion: Urban–rural balance, gender, public–private representation, and disability inclusion
- Target respondents: District officers, heads and assistant heads of schools, DEDs, school boards, student councils, and local communities

Data collection tools

- Questionnaires
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)
- Documentary analysis
- Key informant interviews
- Classroom and school observations (with teacher consent)

Research teams and partnerships

- Principal Investigators (PIs): ADEM, universities, VVOB, and other institutions with established expertise in educational leadership
- Qualifications: At least one doctorate-level researcher or professor specializing in education leadership/management
- Collaboration: Encourage multidisciplinary research teams combining academic, policy, and practitioner perspectives

Partnerships and collaboration

- Government: ADEM, PMO - RALG, MoEVT, MoEST.
- NGOs and Initiatives: CAMFED, FAWE, Milele Zanzibar, Shule Bora, LIT LEAD, ESSA, VVOB
- International Partners: Universities, development partners, and multilateral organizations such as the World Bank and GPE

ICT integration and special considerations

- Addressing the rural–urban digital divide
- Accounting for gender and disability dimensions
- Capturing differences between private and public-school contexts

4. Sector coordination

Stakeholders recognised coordination as a key challenge and opportunity for strengthening school leadership in Tanzania. The roadmap proposes the establishment of structured coordination mechanisms to connect policy, practice, and research — ensuring that efforts are aligned and sustainable.

Structure / Chair/ Name	Objectives	Members	Roles / Responsibilities	Meeting Frequency
1. School Leadership Coordination Forum (SLCF) Supported by a Technical Working Group (TWG) under ESDC. Chair: Rotating among government ministries (MoEST, MoEVT, PMO-RALG).	• Strengthen coordination of school leadership efforts in Tanzania. • Provide a national platform to link policy, practice, research, and implementation. • Ensure alignment of stakeholders' initiatives with government priorities.	• Policymakers: • MoEST, PMO-RALG, MoEVT, ADEM • Civil society organizations • Donors/funders • Researchers (school leadership focus) • School leaders' associations (TAHOSSA, TAPSHA, REDOA, UMEKTA)	• Develop the forum ToR (defining members, goals, roles, and chairing arrangements). • Coordinate and harmonise initiatives on school leadership. • Support policy implementation and advocacy. • Facilitate knowledge exchange and co-creation of solutions. • Monitor and review the progress of leadership initiatives.	• TWG to meet more frequently (quarterly/as needed). • SLCF holds regular coordination meetings (biannual or annual).
2. National School Leaders Platform (NSLP) led by a Secretariat	• Dissemination of evidence & best practices • Co-creation of policies & practice • Advocacy & policy influence • Sharing experiences & fostering change	• School leaders (heads, deputies, teachers) • School Management Committees (SMCs) • Parents (PTAs) & communities • Policymakers & researchers • Middle-tier leaders (REOs, DEOs, WEOs) • NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, Development Partners (e.g., GPE)	• Coordinate school leadership initiatives • Develop guidelines, ToRs, and policies collaboratively • Build leadership capacity (mentorship, coaching, accountability) • Strengthening linkages between research, policy, and practice • Monitor & evaluate school leadership practices	• Bi-annual meetings (national, zonal, district levels) • Ongoing virtual engagement (Zoom, WhatsApp, Google Meet, etc.)

3. Tanzania School Leadership Forum (TSL) —Two-way mechanism: school ↔ ministry - Built on Communities of Learning (CoL) model, linked upward from school → ward → district → regional → national → EAC/SADC. - Chaired by CoL coordinators (school leaders) and connected to Ward Education Officers (mentors).	• Enhance school leadership capacity and CPD. • Strengthen coordination between schools and ministries. • Share best practices, peer learning, and mentorship. • Create feedback loops to inform policy and practice. • Elevate local leadership voices to national and regional levels.	• Head Teachers (primary & secondary). • Ward Education Officers. • District Education Officers. • District Quality Assurance Officers. • PTA representatives (Uwawa). • Retired education experts (as invited). • Private school heads.	• CoL Coordinators (from SL) manage learning communities. • WEOs act as mentors. • Coordinate CPD activities. • Report progress to DEOs (Mainland) / Regional Offices (Zanzibar). • Provide feedback to ministries. • Facilitate peer learning and mentoring. • Integrate activities with national & regional education forums.	• Regular CoL meetings at ward level. • Structured district meetings (via DEOs). • Regional forums periodically. • National forum annually. • Continuous engagement via online platforms (WhatsApp, Zoom).
4. TABEHI – Tanzania Basic Education Heads of Institutions (expansion of TAHOSSA beyond secondary) Chair: Representatives elected from associations (e.g., TAHOSSA, JUWASEZA, Teacher Professional Board).	• Strengthen national-level school leadership coordination. • Bridge gaps between existing district/ regional mechanisms and the national level. • Regularly assess and evaluate teacher performance and leadership effectiveness. • Align coordination with policy and practice for improved learning outcomes.	• Professional Teacher Board. • TAHOSSA. • JUWASEZA. • Other teacher associations. • Communities of Learning (CoL). • Decision-makers from MoEST, MoEVT, PMO - RALG. • Development partners.		

5. School Leadership Association **Chair:** To be appointed; could rotate among TPB, ADEM, or Ministry representatives. **Structure:** Multi-stakeholder body linking Ministry, TPB, ADEM, universities, NGOs, and schools.	• Coordinate school leadership activities across Tanzania and Zanzibar. • Act as a regulator and monitor school leadership standards. • Link universities, training institutions, NGOs, and schools. • Support certification, accreditation, and professional development of school leaders.	• Ministry representatives (MoEST/ MoEVT) Teacher Professional Board (TPB) • ADEM • Universities of education • NGOs (e.g., VVOB, Shule Bora) • ACSL and other associations	• Coordinate and facilitate school leadership training. • Certify and accredit training programs. • Ensure standardized procedures for Head Teacher selection and AHT appointments/ terminations. • Monitor and evaluate school leadership practices. • Serve as a platform for stakeholder collaboration and sharing best practices. • Link national efforts to regional/ continental networks.	• Annual national meetings • Ongoing coordination via Secretariat. • Ward, district, and school-level progress review meetings as needed.

Additional considerations for the taskforce on school leadership:

N°	Sustainability Strategies	Regional & Global Linkages
1	• Build grassroots ownership (engage PTAs, communities). • Continuous capacity building & experience sharing. • Introducing incentives (certificates, awards). • Ensure government and partner financing. • Establish monitoring & evaluation systems. • Institutionalize platform within MoEST/MoEVT while maintaining autonomy. • Use PPPs to mobilize funds and resources.	• Map and connect with SADCC, EAC, and other continental/global education platforms. • Establish MoUs with relevant ministries and organizations for collaboration & funding.
2	• Mainstream CoLs within ministries and DEOs. • Attach CoL participation to job descriptions and appraisal systems. • Recognize high-performing wards/districts. • Ongoing capacity building and structured meetings. • Integrate feedback loops (school → DEO → ministry). • Use digital platforms for continuous engagement. • Secure funding via government and development partners.	

3	• Build on existing platforms (e.g., CoLs, TAHOSSA, Association of Heads of Secondary Schools of Zanzibar (Jumuiya ya Walimu Wakuu wa Skuli za Sekondari za Zanzibar) JUWASEZA). • Establish formal guidelines (ToRs, policies) to institutionalize operations. • Ensure government and institutional support (not only personal funding). • Capacity-building and ongoing engagement for members. • Recognition and incentives for active participation.	• Map and engage with counterparts in SADC, EAC, AU, and global networks. • Establish formal collaboration (MoUs). • Facilitate cross-learning and sharing of best practices (“Ubuntu approach”). • Build on existing headteacher forums across East Africa.
4	• Annual stakeholder meetings for progress sharing and registration. • Partnerships with associations (e.g., ACSL) and NGOs for support and funding. • Financial sustainability through certification fees. • Policy mandates linking certification to school leadership appointments. • Clear procedures for appointments, performance evaluation, and terminations.	• Connect with existing regional networks (SADC, EAC) and continental platforms. • Facilitate knowledge-sharing and best practice exchange with other African countries.

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